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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA POLITICAL NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2-NOVEMBER 6

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¶1. (SBU) This was written in partnership with the Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau. The newsletter is open to contributions from officers in the Embassy or in the Consulates who wish to highlight political trends. Contact Madeline Seidenstricker or Jonathan Smallridge for more information, or to make contributions. The newsletter also is available on the Political Section's blog, "A View from South Africa," found on intelink.gov.

Domestic News

African National Congress Youth league Wants Money for National Development Agency

¶2. (U) The African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) has called on the government to spend millions of dollars to bolster the newly established National Development Agency. Earlier this year, former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel allocated funds to the agency, which is a body composed of the National Youth Commission and Umsombvhu Youth Fund. The ANCYL says the initial money was for setting up offices in 283 municipalities and now additional funds are needed to "fund youth entrepreneurs." The ANCYL has also expressed its disappointment at Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan's decision not to make any allocation for youth development in his medium-term budget policy statement. (Sowetan, November 02, 2009)

Housing Audit to End Graft

¶3. (U) Human Settlements Minister Tokyo Sexwale is planning to root out corrupt contractors and officials from the housing system. He told reporters that a national housing audit headed by the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) will investigate culprits accused of causing chronic and massive problems in housing. Sexwale said publicly that millions of dollars have been recovered by the SIU, and that 800 government officials have been arrested for being unlawful beneficiaries of housing subsidies. Sexwale ended his remarks by saying that it is unfortunate that human settlement was not among government's key priorities alongside national security, health, job creation, education and rural development. (Sowetan, November 3, 2009)

SAHRC To Launch Inquiry On 2008 Xenophobic Attacks

¶4. (U) The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) will at last launch an inquiry into the government's response to the xenophobic attacks of mid-2008. According to advocacy group the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CORMSA), which has been publicly pressing for an official inquiry for over a year, the SAHRC is reaching out to victims, communities, and NGOs for

testimonials on the performance of law enforcement and the judiciary in arresting and punishing perpetrators. (Note: many arrests were made, and special courts for xenophobic violence cases were established in several provinces. However, most cases were dismissed, and postQs unaware of any convictions on charges serious enough to entail jail sentences. End note.) The SAHRC is a government-funded body, but it has autonomy from political interference in its investigations, and it reports to Parliament, not the executive. Its inquiry may take some months, but NGOs hope its findings will include forceful recommendations to the SAG to (a) take proactive steps to avert future violence, and (b) end the impunity that characterized last year's attacks.

¶15. (SBU) Post sent in five additional cables on domestic politics this week. See Reftels for more information.
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International News

South Africa, DRC Vow to Continue Strong Ties

¶16. (U) The Sixth Binational Commission between South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was held in Pretoria from October 27 to 30. South African President Jacob Zuma hosted Congolese President Joseph Kabila, who was accompanied by 12 Ministers and senior government officials. Both countries reviewed curQt cooperative projects in various fields including security sector reform, capacity and institution building, and infrastructure development. The governments want to boost cooperation in the areas of energy and agriculture. (Note: The South African Government is seeking to find land across the continent for many of its white farmers to help with land development in Africa. End Note.) Both delegations also discussed DRC's recent ascendancy to the position

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of Chair of the Southern Africa Development Community. In this regard, the two Heads of State reiterated the importance of security sector reform in view of the planned phasing out of the UN Mission. Both parties agreed that the next Session of the RSA-DRC BNC will be held in the DRC on a date to be determined through diplomatic channels. (DIRCO Briefing, October 30)

Deputy Foreign Minister Reaffirms South Africa's Stance on Palestinian State

¶17. (U) Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim attended the Al Quds International Forum, in Rabat, Morocco on October 28 to discuss the situation in the Middle East. Ebrahim reiterated South Africa's support for the establishment of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. (DIRCO Briefing, October 28)

DIRCO Hosts UK Minister for Africa

¶18. (U) DIRCO Deputy Minister Ebrahim hosted the UK Foreign Office Minister for Africa Baroness Glenys Kinnock for bilateral political and economic discussions at the DIRCO offices in Pretoria on November 2. The meetings focused on strengthening North-South relations and consolidating the African Agenda. Bilateral relations between South Africa and the United Kingdom are strong across the board, covering fields as diverse as defense, trade liberalization and development co-operation. Minister Baroness Kinnock paid a courtesy call on the DIRCO Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane. Discussions included the strengthening of bilateral political and economic relations, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, climate change, international institutional reform, and African regional matters. (DIRCO Briefing, October 30)

Namibian Leader Urges RSA to Ease Border Controls, Share World Cup "Benefits"

¶19. (U) On 4 November Pretoria News Online reported that Namibian

President Pohamba complained that Namibian citizens would not be able to take full advantage of the World Cup unless the South African government eased border controls between the two countries. Zuma agreed to look into the matter. Pohamba was speaking in Pretoria at the start of the annual South Africa-Namibia Bilateral Economic Forum which the two presidents co-chaired. He said progress had been made in implementing most of the past agreements between the two countries, but expressed concern about the slow pace of some undertakings. "We have agreed on the potential benefits that SADC member countries can obtain from South Africa's hosting of the World Cup. This potential will not fully materialize if the matter of cross-border operations by Namibia tour operators is not addressed," he said. [Pretoria Pretoria News Online in English -- Website of local daily, privately owned by Independent Newspaper Company; URL: <http://www.pretorianews.co.za/>]

SA President Zuma Welcomes Equatorial Guinea's Decision to Release Mercenaries

¶10. (U) Zuma has welcomed a decision by Equatorial Guinea to release five mercenaries including South African Nick du Toit and Briton Simon Mann, reported Eye Witness News 3 November. The men were pardoned by the West African country for plotting to overthrow its president in 2004. Mann led the failed coup attempt. He and du Toit were both serving 34 year jail terms. The president's spokesperson Vincent Magwenya said Zuma was headed for Equatorial Guinea on 3 November afternoon. Fellow South African George Alerson was also behind bars. [Johannesburg Eye Witness News in English -- Qwas also behind bars. [Johannesburg Eye Witness News in English -- News website owned by media company Primedia, which owns several radio stations including Radio 702 and 567.CapeTalk; URL: <http://www.ewn.co.za/>]

SADC Official Says Zimbabwe's Leaders Remain Committed to Power-Sharing Deal

¶11. (U) AFP reported on 4 November that Zimbabwe's rival leaders remain committed to the nation's power-sharing deal, despite a deadlock that has paralyzed the unity government, a regional official said ahead of a summit on the crisis. "We're here to continue to help the Zimbabweans in their difficult journey," said Tomaz Salomao, secretary general of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), on the eve of the summit in Mozambique's capital. "One thing I can guarantee is that there is a commitment from all the Zimbabwean parties to make the political agreement work, to make the unity government work, given the positive results it's achieved in its nine months of existence." [Paris AFP (World Service) in English -- world news service of the independent French news agency Agence France Presse]